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Agca's access to journalists creates a stir in Rome

From Herald Wire Services

ROME — Mehmet Ali Agca's dramatic declaration that Soviet and Bulgarian agents aided his shooting of Pope John Paul II touched off a new controversy Saturday over why he was allowed to speak to reporters.

Agca's claims marked the first time the Turkish gunman had made public his charges of Bulgarian and Soviet involvement. In the past he leveled the charges during interrogation.

The known evidence of links between the Turkish gunman and the Kremlin remains inconclusive, and both the Soviet and Bulgarian news agencies denied Agca's assertions Saturday.

Agca told reporters while he was being escorted from Rome police headquarters Friday that he had been to Bulgaria and Syria "several times" and that the KGB and Bulgarian agents took part in the May

gero, however, speculated that the encounter with the journalists may have been a ploy by investigators to give publicity to Agca's position.

13, 1981, attack on the pope.

In Moscow, the official Soviet news agency Tass said, "There are absolutely no facts to bear out, directly or indirectly, the socialist countries' complicity in the heinous crime."

Tass said Agca's charge was meant to divert attention from "the true organizers and inspirers of acts of terrorism, who are closely linked with neo-Fascist circles and the American CIA."

"There is nothing new in the slanders publicly repeated on Friday by Ali Agca," an editor of the Bulgarian official news agency BTA said in Sofia, the Bulgarian capital. He called the charge "absurd and groundless."

Press reports in Rome said Justice Minister Clelio Darida has ordered an inquiry to discover why Agca was permitted to speak to journalists.

An officer of the DIGOS anti-ter-

rorist squad said he thought the encounter with journalists happened by chance.

Rome's leading daily Il Messag-